

**STATE OF MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE STATE BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

IN THE MATTER OF:

DESTINEE WRIGHT-WEICHERT, D.V.M.
LICENSE NO. 7766

DOCKET NO. 22-77

* * * * *

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER

This Consent Agreement and Order ("Consent Agreement"), dated this 27th day of September 2022, is between the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners ("SBVME" or "Board") and Destinee Wright-Weichert, D.V.M. ("Dr. Wright-Weichert"), License No. 7766. This Consent Agreement resolves a case arising from a complaint filed on February 7, 2022, with the SBVME in Docket No. 22-77, alleging that Dr. Wright-Weichert violated the Veterinary Practice Act, Md. Code Ann., Agric. §§ 2-301 – 2-316 and related Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR") 15.14.01 – 15.14.1, as set forth herein.

On August 24, 2022, Dr. Wright-Weichert, having had the opportunity to seek the advice of legal counsel, agreed to resolve this case under the terms and conditions reflected in this Consent Agreement. By signing this Consent Agreement, Dr. Wright-Weichert agrees to waive her right to a hearing on the charges in Docket No. 22-77 and further agrees to the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement. Before entering into this agreement, Dr. Wright-Weichert was informed regarding her due process rights, as set forth in Md. Code Ann., Agric. § 2-311.

Under Maryland law, the SBVME is the licensing authority responsible for regulating the practice of veterinary medicine in this State, which includes filing disciplinary actions against veterinarians charged with violating the provisions of the Veterinary Practice Act and related COMAR regulations adopted pursuant to this law. As part of its authority, the SBVME "may refuse, suspend, or revoke any application or license, and censure or place on probation any licensee ... if the veterinarian ... [f]ails to comply with Board rules and regulations after receiving a license." Md. Code Ann., Agric. § 2-310(8). The Board may

also impose a civil penalty of not more than \$5,000 for a first offense, or \$10,000 for a second or subsequent offense, in lieu of or in addition to suspending or revoking a veterinarian's license, respectively. Agric. § 2-310.1. In setting the amount of a civil penalty, the Board shall consider the severity of the violation, the good faith of the violator, and any history of prior violations, as well as the Board's civil penalty standards. Md. Code Ann., State Gov't. § 10-1001(b); COMAR 15.14.11 (Civil Penalty Standards for Veterinarians).

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Destinee Wright-Weichert, D.V.M., License Number 7766, by entering into and signing this Consent Agreement, having had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel, agrees to the provisions of this Consent Agreement, acknowledging that the SBVME has sufficient evidence to find, as fact, and to conclude as a matter of law that Dr. Wright-Weichert did not satisfy COMAR 15.14.01.07 (Professional Judgment and Practice) as set forth herein:

1. Dr. Wright-Weichert is a veterinarian licensed to practice in Maryland, where she has been licensed since 2017. Dr. Wright-Weichert was, at the time of the events described herein, a veterinarian at Honeygo Animal Hospital (License No. 03-144) ("HAH") located at 11541 Philadelphia Road, White Marsh, MD 21162. Dr. Wright-Weichert has no prior disciplinary history with the Board.
2. This case involves veterinary care and treatment provided to Jack, an approximately 5-year-old neutered coonhound owned by Brittany Shrieves ("Ms. Shrieves" or "Owner").
3. On February 2, 2022, Ms. Shrieves took Jack to HAH for vomiting and lethargy. According to Ms. Shrieves, Jack tended to eat foreign objects, so she was concerned that Jack might have an obstruction.
4. Dr. Wright-Weichert was Jack's attending veterinarian on that date. Dr. Wright-Weichert performed a physical exam on Jack. As reflected in the medical record, Dr. Wright-Weichert found that Jack's abdomen was mildly painful. She recommended abdominal radiographs, and Ms. Shrieves consented.
5. Radiographs were taken. According to Dr. Wright-Weichert, these showed mild gas distention of the stomach, which she interpreted as aerophagia (excessive air swallowing) from Jack's multiple episodes

of vomiting. Dr. Wright-Weichert told Ms. Shrieves that she did not see any signs of gastrointestinal obstruction and believed that Jack had gastroenteritis.

6. Dr. Wright-Weichert administered subcutaneous fluids and Cerenia to Jack and recommended a diet of small meals of bland food before discharging the dog from HAH.

7. Later that night, Jack became more lethargic, started drooling, and had trouble breathing. Ms. Shrieves was concerned that the Cerenia prescribed caused these symptoms.

8. On February 3, 2022, Ms. Shrieves called HAH and told them that Jack had died overnight. She asked for a necropsy to be performed. Ms. Shrieves then took Jack to HAH, and Dr. Julie Wright ("Dr. Wright") (License No. 5101, DVM), the owner and responsible veterinarian of HAH, performed the necropsy.

9. Dr. Wright noted on the necropsy that Jack's intestines were purple/black and ulcerated. Dr. Wright found a linear foreign material (pink string and clothlike material) and hard, sharp green plastic material, believed to be a squeaker from a toy.

10. Dr. Wright called Ms. Shrieves and informed her of the necropsy findings. Dr. Wright told Ms. Shrieves that Jack had extensive and severe tissue damage, and there was little or no possibility that Jack would have survived an exploratory surgery.

11. On February 7, 2022, Ms. Shrieves filed a complaint with the SBVME against Dr. Wright-Weichert. Ms. Shrieves stated that Dr. Wright-Weichert was aware that Jack could have a possible obstruction, and she should have offered to perform bloodwork, an ultrasound, or refer Jack to an emergency clinic. Ms. Shrieves also stated that Dr. Wright-Weichert should not have given Jack Cerenia because the label warns against using it if there is a possibility of an obstruction.

12. The Board opened a case and conducted an investigation. After considering all evidence presented, including Dr. Wright-Weichert's response, the Board concluded that Dr. Wright-Weichert provided substandard care to Jack.

13. COMAR 15.14.01.07A (Professional Judgment and Practice) provides that: "[a] veterinarian, when caring for and treating a patient, shall conform to those minimum standards of care and treatment which are

customary among veterinarians in this State.” Dr. Wright-Weichert failed to satisfy the applicable by failing to identify a foreign body in the abdominal radiographs and by failing to offer a radiology consult for another opinion on the radiographs when she did not identify a foreign body. She also did not offer an abdominal ultrasound or referral to an emergency clinic or to another facility that could provide additional care. Jack would have had a chance of survival if he received the proper diagnosis and surgery necessary to remove the foreign body in a timely manner. Although some pets may pass foreign bodies if they are adequately hydrated and have appropriate supportive care, that is often not the case, especially with linear foreign bodies.

14. In addition, the standard of care required Dr. Wright-Weichert to offer bloodwork to the Owner, which Dr. Wright-Weichert failed to do. Bloodwork could have provided helpful information to form the diagnosis and treatment plan, including information to rule out possible sepsis, possible toxins, pancreatitis, kidney disease, electrolyte abnormalities, and dehydration status, among other things. The record reflects that when Dr. Wright-Weichert examined Jack on February 2, 2022, the dog had lost ten pounds since his last visit. This weight loss called for Dr. Wright-Weichert to recommend or offer additional diagnostics, including bloodwork.

15. Furthermore, Dr. Wright-Weichert did not administer sufficient fluids for a dog of Jack’s size (79 pounds/35.8 kgs.). The standard of care requires 10 mls per pound for subcutaneous fluids. Dr. Wright-Weichert’s decision to administer only 150 mls of subcutaneous fluids to a large dog was insufficient to treat his dehydration. Intravenous fluid therapy would have been more appropriate in this case based on the severity of his illness.

Taking the facts and circumstances into consideration, including the nature of the violation(s), the veterinarian’s disciplinary history, her acceptance of responsibility and good faith cooperation in resolving this matter, the Board concluded that the most reasonable and appropriate resolution includes the sanctions set forth below.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 27th day of September, 2022, by the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, ORDERED that:

- (a) For violating COMAR 15.14.01.07 (Professional Judgment and Practice) in the care and treatment provided to Jack, an approximately 5-year-old neutered coonhound owned by Brittany Shrieves, by failing to identify an obstruction on the abdominal radiographs, failing to offer a radiology consult, failing to offer bloodwork, and/or administering insufficient fluids for a dog of Jack's size, Dr. Wright-Weichert is assessed a civil penalty of \$1000;
- (b) Dr. Wright-Weichert shall pay the civil penalty within sixty (60) days from the date of this Consent Agreement by check payable to the Maryland Department of Agriculture ("MDA") with the notation "SBVME – 22-77" sent to the MDA at 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401;
- (c) As an additional requirement of this Consent Agreement, Dr. Wright-Weichert shall complete six hours of continuing education ("CE") in radiology, internal medicine, or GI or abdominal obstruction. The CE proposed to be taken to satisfy this Consent Agreement shall be submitted to the Board via email to the Board's Executive Director, Nathaniel Boan, in advance, for a determination that the proposed CE satisfies the terms of this Consent Agreement;
- (d) CE shall be completed and verification of completion provided to the Board within sixty (60) days from the date of this Order. Verification should be sent by email to Nathaniel Boan, Executive Director, at nathaniel.boan@maryland.gov. Proof from the CE provider shall include the veterinarian's name, the hours of CE completed, the topics covered, and the date(s) the CE was given. This CE shall not count toward the 18 credit hours required annually for re-registration of the veterinary license. To verify

completion of the annual CE requirements and the CE required by this Consent Agreement, the Board may conduct an audit of the veterinarian's CE records for relevant years; and

(e) This Consent Agreement is a public document.

WITNESS the hand of the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, State of Maryland, this

27th day of September, 2022.

STATE BOARD OF VETERINARY
MEDICAL EXAMINERS

 /NEB

Karena Joung, V.M.D.

Vice-President

State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners

Maryland Department of Agriculture

CONSENT

I, Destinee Wright-Weichert, D.V.M., acknowledge that I have had an opportunity to consult with counsel before entering into this Consent Agreement. By this Consent, I hereby acknowledge the legal authority and jurisdiction of the Board over this matter to issue and enforce this Consent Agreement. To resolve this matter, I agree to accept and submit to the foregoing Consent Agreement, consisting of seven pages, including this Consent. I sign this Consent Agreement without reservation as my voluntary act and deed after having had an opportunity to consult with counsel, and I acknowledge that I fully understand and comprehend the language, meaning, and terms of this Consent Agreement.

Date: 9/18/22


Destinee Wright-Weichert, D.V.M.